

DOMESTIC CREDIT

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The 1864 Election

Pomeroy Circular

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor,
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THE POMEROY CIRCULAR

A circular, appearing over the signature of Senator S. C. Pomeroy of Kansas, was distributed as a preliminary document in a "Chase for President" movement in 1864. It received wide publicity at the time and is still recalled as one of the most critical attacks on the Lincoln administration.

Senator Pomeroy was one of the committee of Senators who, in 1862, visited Abraham Lincoln and urged, almost demanded, the removal of Seward from the Cabinet. Here we observe what is possibly Pomeroy's first outward break with the administration and the beginning of his alliance with the Chase faction.

The two Senators from Kansas, Lane and Pomeroy, were continually clashing which called forth a reprimand to Pomeroy from the President in these words: "I wish you and Lane would make a sincere effort to get out of the mood you are in. It does neither of you any good; it gives you the means of tormenting my life out of me, and nothing else."

The opposition group in the Republican party took form under the name of the National Executive Committee, and Senator Pomeroy was made the chairman. The committee, attempting to head off public sentiment for a second term for Lincoln, was anxious to press the claims of Chase. This was responsible for the famous circular released in February 1864, in which five definite statements were made with reference to the administration as follows:

"First, that even were the reelection of Mr. Lincoln desirable, it is practically impossible against the union of influences which will oppose him.

"Second, that should he be reelected, his manifest tendency towards compromises and temporary expedients of policy will become stronger during a second term than it has been in the first, and the cause of human liberty, and the dignity and honor of the nation, suffer proportionately, while the war may continue to languish during his whole Administration, till the public debt shall become a burden too great to be borne.

"Third, that the patronage of the Government through the necessities of the war has been so rapidly increased, and to such an enormous extent, and so loosely placed, as to render the application of the 'one-term principle' absolutely essential to the certain safety of our republican institutions.

"Fourth, that we find united in Hon. Salmon P. Chase more of the qualities needed in a President during the next four years than are combined in any other available candidate; his record, clear and unimpeachable, showing him to be a statesman of rare ability and an administrator of the very highest order, while his private character furnishes the surest obtainable guarantee of economy and purity in the management of public affairs.

"Fifth, that the discussion of the Presidential question, already commenced by the friends of Mr. Lincoln, has developed a popularity and strength in Mr. Chase unexpected even to his warmest admirers; and while we are aware that this strength is at present unorganized, and in no condition to manifest its real magnitude, we are satisfied that it only needs systematic and faithful effort to develop it to an extent sufficient to overcome all opposing obstacles."

Mr. Chase at once wrote to the President after the circular appeared, stating that he had no knowledge of the letter until he saw it in print. Mr. Lincoln replied that he had known of Mr. Pomeroy's activities for several weeks and was not surprised at the appearance of the letter. He then assured Mr. Chase that he perceived no occasion for his removal from the Cabinet.

One of the Cabinet members, however, expressed himself in very frank terms with respect to the situation as will be evident from these excerpts from the original letters:

"Department of the Interior

"Washington, D. C., Feby 17 1864

"R. W. Thompson Esq

"Dear Sir, A secret circular has just been issued signed by Pomeroy chairman for Chase for President. Mr. C. must have knowledge of & approved it. It contains reflections upon the President of such an offensive character that there will have to be explanations and will I think cause a rupture in the cabinet. There is much caballing & plotting going on here all dangerous to the government and there will have to be explanations. I hope for the peace of the country that our convention will most unmistakably declare for Lincoln, by doing that it will tend to suppress some of the malcontents now making mischief. They are looking for the strong side and when they find that Lincoln is to have the further control, if it be had at all by a Union man, they will be for him & cease their creating difficulties. I have written fully to Gov. Morton may be he will show you the letter.

"Truly yours

"J. P. Usher"

"Department of the Interior

"Washington D. C. Feby 25th 1864

"Hon R. W. Thompson

"Dear Sir, I handed your dispatch to the President last evening with which he was much gratified. I suppose you have seen the Pomeroy circular and have been amazed that Mr. Chase should have allowed such a paper to go to the public. It is a most indecent thing and how a man of strict honour can hold his position as advisor of the President after stating that he disagreed with him in his policy is more than I can tell—Lincoln says but little finds fault with none & judging from his deportment you would suppose he was as little concerned as any one about the result—I do not see how we are to keep the family together much longer and you need not be surprised to hear of a disintegration of the cabinet any day. . . .

"Yours truly

"John P. Usher"

It was not until March 10, 1864, when he addressed the Senate at length on the subject of the forthcoming Presidential election, that Senator Pomeroy made public reference to the circular. Pomeroy was interrupted but once during the speech, when Senator Doolittle arose to inquire if it was the purpose of Mr. Pomeroy to organize a new political party. Pomeroy replied that "no party now exists which has ever been seen in a national convention." He then outlined the objectives of the new political organization. (1) Immediate suppression of rebellion, (2) Constitutional amendment prohibiting slavery, (3) Maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine, (4) Rigid economy, (5) Confiscation of property of rebel leaders, (6) Sound system of national currency, (7) Subordination of states to general government, (8) One term for President, (9) Liberty of speech and publication, (10) Liberal and protective system of foreign emigration, and (11) Extension of transcontinental railway systems.

Pomeroy's speech was the swan song of the newly proposed political party, for it sounded the death knell of Chase's Presidential aspirations. When Thad Stevens observed that Lincoln and Seward were going to Gettysburg in November, 1863, for the dedicatory exercises and learned that Chase and Stanton were to remain in Washington, he remarked, "Let the (politically) dead bury the dead." Lincoln's political prospects at that time were at low ebb and Chase was in the ascendancy. Four months later, however, it appears as if it would have been just as well for Chase to have gone to Gettysburg as far as his political fortunes were concerned. The Pomeroy circular will always be remembered as another one of those many new party appeals which failed to arouse a sympathetic public sentiment.

Lincoln's Second Term Preliminaries

By LOUIS A. WARREN, Director
Lincoln National Life Foundation

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Lincoln's Second Term Preliminaries

THE emphasis placed on the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for the Presidency in 1860 has largely overshadowed the importance of his second nomination on June 8, 1864. The Wigwam Convention at Chicago with all of its glamour and dramatic setting was much more colorful than the Baltimore gathering, but no more important in the light of historical events which followed.

Abraham Lincoln served but one term as the representative of the Republican Party. He was nominated for a second term by a newly formed political organization called the Union Party. This group was composed of a coalition of voters from the four parties which contested the 1860 election, and they had banded together in 1864 for the primary purpose of preserving the Union.

One editorial writer commented, "We know no other party than the Union men; than the men, that is to say, who, before the war belonged to all the parties; Democrats, Republicans, and Bell-Everett men and who are now united in an uninfluenced and intelligent support of the policy of the administration in conducting the war."

The real patriots of 1864 submerged all party ambitions for the greater objective of saving the Union. Political fences were repaired only by politicians who had personal ambitions. Not since the days of President Monroe had there been such a general desire for national political unity.

In the month of October, 1863, Lincoln had occasion to make a comment about politics, which throws much light on his own freedom from partisanship. He wrote: "I concur in the propriety of your request in regard to elections, and have, as you see, directed General Schofield accordingly. I do not feel justified to enter upon the broad field you present in regard to the political differences between Radicals and Conservatives. From time to time I have done and said what appeared to me proper to do and say. The public knows it all. It obliges nobody to follow me, and I trust it obliges me to follow no-

body. The Radicals and Conservatives each agree with me in some things and disagree in others. I could wish both to agree with me in all things, for then they would agree with each other and would be too strong for any foe from any quarter. They, however, choose to do otherwise; and I do not question their right. I too shall do what seems to be my duty."

The disintegration of existing political parties began early in the war within the Republican Party itself. The abolitionist element in the party became dissatisfied with Lincoln and looked about for a new champion to carry the abolitionist banner in 1864. When Thad Stevens observed that Lincoln and Seward were going to Gettysburg in November, 1863, for the dedicatory exercises and learned that Chase was to remain in Washington, he remarked, "Let the (politically) dead bury the dead." Lincoln's political prospects at that time were at low ebb and Chase was in the ascendancy.

On January 2, 1864, *Harper's Weekly* printed its leading editorial under the caption, "Presidential Prospects." After reviewing the field the writer concludes, "No man at this moment has so sure a hold of the national heart as the President . . . If the Presidential election took place next week Mr. Lincoln would undoubtedly be returned by a greater majority than any President since Washington."

Another editorial writer very frankly stated that he did not consider Mr. Lincoln politically as a Republican "for he is not. He is simply a Union man, and the strongest opposition to him springs from those who were formerly Republicans."

The opposition group within the Republican Party assembled in Washington in January, 1860, and appointed what was called the National Executive Committee with Senator Pomeroy as chairman. The primary objective of this early meeting was to head off public sentiment demanding a second term for Lincoln.



Broadside used in Presidential Campaign of 1864.

A circular was issued in February by the committee over the signature of the chairman, Pomeroy, which gave five statements derogatory to the Lincoln administration. This political document known as the Pomeroy circular aroused the friends of the administration. The circular put forth the name of Salmon P. Chase as the choice of the National Executive Committee to succeed President Lincoln.

Mr. Chase at once wrote to the President after the circular appeared, stating that he had no knowledge of the letter until he saw it in print. Mr. Lincoln replied that he had known of Mr. Pomeroy's activities for several weeks and was not surprised at the appearance of the letter. He then assured Mr. Chase that he perceived no occasion for his removal from the Cabinet.

It was not until March 10, 1864, when Senator Pomeroy addressed the Senate at length on the subject of the forthcoming Presidential election, that he made public reference to the circular. He was interrupted but once during the speech, when Senator Doolittle arose to inquire if it was his purpose to organize a new political party. Pomeroy replied that "no party now exists which has ever been seen in a national convention."

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Pomeroy took occasion to amplify the rather startling statement, saying that no one of the four parties supporting Presidential candidates in 1860 had been able to survive the disintegrating influences of the 1860 election and the war which followed.

"The Democratic Party . . . held its discordant elements together until the Charleston Convention in 1860. In the canvass of that year running two candidates . . . the two factions struck against each other and were destroyed in the concussion. Since then we have had no National Democratic Party."

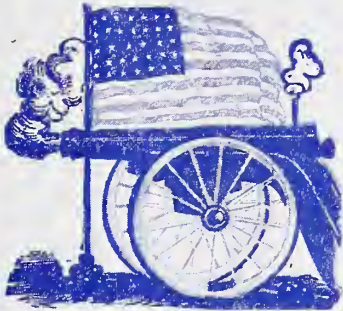
Mr. Pomeroy reviewed the fate of the Republican Party in these words: "The mission of the Republican Party ended when its work was accomplished. That work was to stay the progress of slavery and preserve the public domain to freedom. It never pretended to do more. But it made two splendid campaigns and died in its last triumph!"

Pomeroy's speech was the swan song of the newly proposed political party, as well, for it sounded the death knell of Chase's Presidential aspirations. It would have been just as well for Chase to have gone to Gettysburg with Lincoln and Seward as far as his political fortunes were concerned. The Pomeroy circular will always be remembered as another one of those many new party appeals which failed to arouse a sympathetic public sentiment.

Harper's Weekly again commented editorially on the availability of Lincoln for the Presidency after the Pomeroy pamphlet had been circulated. The editor wrote: Nor is it likely that the people who elected him (Lincoln) when he was comparatively unknown will discard him because, in the fierce light of war which tries every quality and exposes every defect, he has steadily grown in popular love and confidence."

Later on Republicans dissatisfied with the administration's conduct of the war attempted to put a candidate in the field, and went so far as to hold a convention which recognized John C. Fremont as its potential leader. The effort lacked stamina and it faded out, giving the Republican Party no contender for national honors in the Presidential campaign of 1864.

UNCONDITIONAL UNION TICKET.



FOR PRESIDENT,

Abraham Lincoln

FOR VICE PRESIDENT,

Andrew Johnson.

FOR ELECTORS AT LARGE.

DAVID S. GOODING.

RICHARD W. THOMPSON.

FOR STATE ELECTORS.

1st Dist.—JAMES C. DENNY.

2d Dist.—CYRUS T. NIXON.

3d Dist.—HENRY R. PRITCHARD.

4th Dist.—LEONIDAS SEXTON.

5th Dist.—BENJ. F. CLAYPOOL.

6th Dist.—JONATHAN J. WRIGHT.

7th Dist.—JOHN OSBORN.

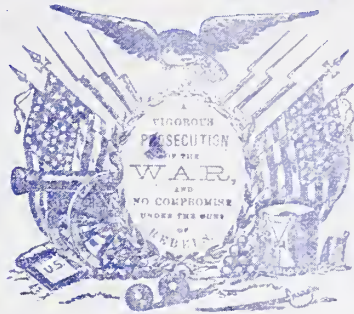
8th Dist.—ROBERT P. DAVIDSON.

9th Dist.—JAMES B. BELFORD.

10th Dist.—TIMOTHY R. DICKINSON.

11th Dist.—JOHN M. WALLACE.

OHIO UNION PRESIDENTIAL TICKET.



FOR PRESIDENT,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

OF ILLINOIS.

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT,

ANDREW JOHNSON,

OF TENNESSEE.

ELECTORS.

JOHN M. CONNELL, } At Large.
JOHN P. BIEHN, }

1st District.	—JOHN K. GREEN.
2d "	STANLEY MATTHEWS.
3d "	LEWIS B. GUNCKEL.
4th "	STEPHEN JOHNSTON.
5th "	WILLIAM L. WALKER.
6th "	MILLS GARDNER.
7th "	HENRY W. SMITH.
8th "	OZIAS BOWEN.
9th "	JACOB SCHOGGS.
10th "	WILLIAM SHEFFIELD.
11th "	GEORGE A. WALLER.
12th "	HENRY F. PAGE.
13th "	JAMES R. STANBERRY.
14th "	JOHN H. MCCOY.
15th "	FREDERICK W. WOOD.
16th "	LORENZO DANFORD.
17th "	JOHN MCCOOK.
18th "	BETH MARSHALL.
19th "	AMNER KELLOGG.

Tickets of Indiana and Ohio, showing the use of "Union" instead of "Republican."

On June 7 the Union Convention convened at Baltimore and nominated Abraham Lincoln, a former Republican, for President, and Andrew Johnson, a former Democrat, for Vice-President. As one writer puts it: "Ancient party bonds are broken. When those who, four years ago, were uncompromising Republicans cordially fraternize with such undoubted old Democrats as Daniel S. Dickinson and Benjamin F. Butler and Thomas G. Alvord, and ardently support

for the Vice-Presidency a late slaveholding Southern Democrat like Andrew Johnson, it is clear that those party names have lost their significance, and that the sole bond of Union is a common devotion to the country, and a common resolution that it shall be saved by all honorable and lawful means. It is idle to call a convention which nominated Andrew Johnson a Republican Convention in any purely party sense; or to suppose that General Butler, for in-

stance, will vote for Mr. Lincoln as a technical Democrat."

These conclusions about the objectives of the Union Party are borne out by the first resolution of the platform which stated, "Laying aside all differences of political opinion, we pledge ourselves, as Union men, animated by a common sentiment and aiming at a common object to do everything in our power to aid the government in quelling by force of arms the rebellion now raging against its authority . . . "The word Republican is no where to be found in any of the party planks.

THERE has always been much difference of opinion as to just how much Abraham Lincoln influenced the proceedings of the Union Convention at Baltimore; and, especially, how much he had to do with the nomination of Andrew Johnson, a lifelong Democrat, as a candidate for the Vice-Presidency.

John G. Nicolay, Lincoln's private secretary, who it might be said was Lincoln's representative at the convention in Baltimore, wrote to John Hay at Washington two days before Lincoln was nominated and said in part: "I told Cook that I thought Lincoln would not wish even to indicate a preference for Vice-President as the rival candidates were all friendly to him." Nicolay further continued with this pointed question: "Cook wants to know confidentially whether Sweet is all right; whether in urging Holt for Vice-President he reflects the President's wishes; whether the President has any preference, either personal or on the score of policy; or whether he wishes not even to interfere by a confidential indication." A part of Lincoln's endorsement, directly to the point, follows: "wish not to interfere about Vice-President. A. Lincoln."

This simple statement from Abraham Lincoln, that he did not wish to interfere with the wishes of the delegates at the convention about the Vice-Presidency, should be sufficient evidence to settle the question of his non-intervention in the matter. It would seem quite natural that a Union Convention would think it expedient to have both of the

former major political parties represented on the ticket.

A short time after the convention Lincoln wrote a letter to John L. Scripps in which he stated that there had been a complaint registered that Scripps was using his official power to defeat Mr. Arnold's nomination to Congress. Lincoln advised him, "My wish therefore is that you will do just as you think fit with your own suffrage in the case, and not constrain any of your subordinates to do other than as he thinks fit with his. This is precisely the rule I inculcated and adhered to on my part, when a certain other nomination, now recently made, was being canvassed for." This nomination undoubtedly referred to the selection of Vice-President at the Baltimore Convention.

The **Boston Journal** in reporting the results of the convention makes this statement: "Yesterday (June 8) at Baltimore, in a convention somewhat wider in its range of membership than that at Chicago, Abraham Lincoln received every vote cast on the first ballot. This is an anomalous fact in our politics. Yet it has come about naturally—indeed, none but the most ignorant or the most reckless would dare to affirm that an event of this magnitude could be worked out by any of the arts of political chicanery and intrigue. It is merely the utterance of the deliberate judgment of the people on the whole that Abraham Lincoln is the best man to be his own successor in the Presidential chair till this great rebellion is over."

To the committee of notification Lincoln replied, "I will neither conceal my gratification nor restrain the expression of my gratitude that the Union people, through their convention, in their continued effort to save and advance the nation, have deemed me not unworthy to remain in my present position."

On June 9, 1864, two days after the Union Convention had nominated Lincoln as Presidential candidate, a delegation from the National Union League called on the President. In response to their spokesman Lincoln used a statement that has become a political proverb. It is to be regretted that the entire statement as recorded by Nicolay and Hay is not used. This is what

NATIONAL UNION TICKET.



PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS.

AT LARGE.

EDWARD EVERETT, of Boston, and WHITING GRISWOLD, of Greenfield.

- District 1.—RICHARD BORDEN, of Fall River.
 " 2.—ARTHUR HALE, of Bridgewater.
 " 3.—GEORGE FURNACE, of Hingham.
 " 4.—JOHN M. S. WILLIAMS, of Cambridge.
 " 5.—JOHN G. WINTHROP, of Amesbury.
 " 6.—GEORGE L. DAVIS, of North Andover.
 " 7.—STEPHEN M. WELD, of West Hingham.
 " 8.—LEVI LINCOLN, of Worcester.
 " 9.—WILLIAM S. CLARK, of Amherst.
 " 10.—JOHN WELLS, of Athol.

STATE TICKET.

FOR GOVERNOR,

JOHN A. ANDREW,
 OF BOSTON.

FOR LIEUT. GOVERNOR,

JOEL HAYDEN,
 OF WILLIAMSBURG.

For Secretary of the Commonwealth,

OLIVER WARNER, of Northampton.

For Treasurer and Receiver General,

HENRY K. OLIVER, of Salem.

For Auditor,

LEVI REED, of Abington.

For Attorney-General,

CHESTER I. REED, of Taunton.

For Councillor, Dist. No. 8,

J. F. FITCHCOCK, of Warren.

For County Commissioner,

JOSEPH E. WAITT, of Malden.

For County Treasurer,

AMOS STONE, of Charlestown.

For Register of Deeds, Middlesex Southern District,

Caleb HAYDEN, of Cambridge.

For Senator, District No. 3,

ALDEN LELAND, of Holliston.

For Representative to Congress, District No. 2,

GEORGE S. BOUTWELL, of Groton.

For Representatives to General Court, District No. //

Geo. L. Sawin.

*Another form, the "National Union Ticket"
 of Massachusetts.*

Lincoln is reported to have said: "I do not allow myself to suppose that either the convention or the league have concluded to decide that I am either the greatest or best man in America, but rather they have concluded that it is not best to swap horses while crossing the river, and have further concluded that I am not so poor a horse that they might not make a botch of it in trying to swap."

One other version of the quotation states that Lincoln said, "I am reminded of a story of an old Dutch farmer, who remarked to a companion once that 'it was not best to swap horses when crossing streams.' " Whatever the correct statement may have been, it was most certainly said after the nominations for candidates were made, and had no bearing whatever on his selection as the Presidential nominee.

A short time after the convention President Lincoln visited the Sanitary Fair at Philadelphia, and in the course of the evening Mr. Edward Everett had occasion to make an address which he concluded by saying, "There are various kinds of traffic in these fairs, buying and subscribing. There is one kind of traffic that I hope will not be protected and that is 'in swapping horses when crossing a stream.' " This statement of Everett gave a wider circulation to the proverb.

In the midst of the campaign Governor Randall of Wisconsin advised Lincoln that to invigorate himself he should "seek seclusion and play hermit for a season." To this good advice Lincoln replied, "I cannot fly from my thoughts—my solicitude for this great country follows me wherever I go. I do not think it is personal vanity or ambition, though I am not free from these infirmities, but I cannot but feel that the weal or woe of this great nation will be decided in November."

The campaign proper was very much like the one of 1860 in so far as Lincoln's taking any active participation in it was concerned. At one time he was very pessimistic about the success of the new Union Party in 1864, and so stated in the following memorandum dated August 23: "This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President-elect, as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration as he will have secured his election on such grounds that he cannot possibly save it afterwards. A. Lincoln."

Even as late as October 19, just a few days before the election, Lincoln was still in doubt about the probable re-

sult of the election, and in reply to a group which had given him a serenade he said: "If I shall live I shall remain President until the 4th of next March; and that whoever shall be constitutionally elected therefore, in November, shall be duly installed as President on the 4th of March; and that, in the interval, I shall do my utmost that whoever is to hold the helm for the next voyage shall start with the best possible chance to save the ship." It was Abraham Lincoln himself whom the people elected to "save the ship," and he saw it safely in port shortly after his second term began.

He was also to make another mark in the annals of the political history of the nation by his martyrdom. If Abraham Lincoln had lived, the Republican Party might have died. In fact according to Pomeroy and other party leaders, it was dead in 1864.

With the elevation of Vice-President Johnson, a lifelong Democrat, to the chief executive's chair vacated by a former Republican, the Union Party went

on the rocks and the old political alignment of Republicans and Democrats went to fence building again.

From the ashes of Lincoln a new Republican Party arose, and possibly it has survived through the years to preserve the nation in some other great national emergency. If so, Abraham Lincoln might be called the twofold saviour of the Union.

EDITOR'S NOTE—Dr. Louis A. Warren, author of the foregoing article, is director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne Indiana, and author of a number of books on Lincoln. Among the most important are "Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood," "Abraham Lincoln, A Concise Biography," "Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace," and "Lincoln's Political Background." He is considered one of the greatest authorities on Lincoln's ancestry, childhood and youth. He is the editor of "Lincoln Lore," and "The Lincoln Kinsman." He is a graduate of Transylvania University, and in 1929, he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature from Lincoln Memorial University, because of his contribution to the field of Lincoln literature. He is much in demand as a speaker and lecturer on Lincoln and related subjects.

Pomeroy Cir III

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LINCOLN LORE

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April 17, 1950

CHASE AND THE POMEROY CIRCULAR

(Political Puzzle of 1864 No. 3)

Senator Samuel Clarke Pomeroy, Chairman of the National Executive Committee, and Salmon Portland Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, played the leading roles in the political drama enacted during February 1864. The circular issued by Pomeroy attacking President Lincoln and advocating Mr. Chase as his successor offered the chief topic of conversation for several weeks. The candidacy of Chase, heretofore promoted under cover, was brought out into the open by the distribution of the circular.

Put forth as a prominent candidate for the presidency in 1860 Mr. Chase was never able to smother his ambition to occupy the chair of the chief executive. This desire was greatly accentuated by the encouragement of his popular and influential daughter, Kate. Apparently he was anxious to cast his lot with parties which, for the hour, seemed to be on the ascendancy. This attitude may be revealed in a tabulation of his many shifts of political interest: Whig, 1840; Liberty, 1841; Free Soil, 1848; Democratic, 1855; Republican, 1857; and Union, 1864. That this political vacillation continued is evident from a note written to Lincoln by P. Rush Plumley as late as July 16, 1864. He advised Lincoln that the Democrats would possibly nominate the ex-governor of Ohio "if they make a platform on which Chase can stand. He will step on it if they 'will let him'."

Just how early Chase started an organized effort to gain the 1864 presidential nomination of some political party is not known. However, soon after his appointment by Mr. Lincoln to the cabinet, the patronage which flowed through the office began to take on a "Chase for President" complexion. The Treasury Department soon formed the nucleus for what later became a formidable political organization. Ex-Governor Tod of Ohio on February 26, 1864 advised Mr. Lincoln, "Mr. Chase has been laboring for the past year at least with an eye single to promote his own selfish purposes, totally regardless to the consequences to the government."

Previous to April 9, 1863 Chase had been in correspondence with an anti-Lincoln political leader in New York named John A. Stevens, Jr. On the above date Chase advised Stevens, "I have written the letter you requested me to write and addressed it as directed to James A. Roosevelt Esq." Chase advised Stevens that he might think the letter "too explicit and direct" and continued "but it seems to me that the times require plainness of speech."

The presidential election year, 1864, had no sooner dawned than L. E. Chittenden, Register of the Treasury, on January 2 wrote to Stevens: "I do not feel that it would be judicious under the circumstances to have Mr. Sessions, or any one else, come here now and act as the recognized agent of Gov. Chase's immediate friends . . . cannot the matter be arranged to Mr. Greeley's entire satisfaction, by Mr. Gay." The most influential journalist back of the Chase movement was Horace Greeley.

Three days later Stevens replied to Chittenden in part as follows: "It is very unfortunate for the interests of Mr. Chase that there is any doubt about the chief justiceship. You will not find many persons disinterested enough to battle in a cause of a chieftain who may at any moment disconnect himself from the success of that cause . . . Nor do I entirely concur in your view that Mr. Lincoln cannot be defeated in convention by any other than Mr. Chase." As early as this Chase also had his eyes on the chief justiceship anticipating the demise of the aged Taney. Chase was reluctant to openly break with Lincoln, for fear of injuring his prospects for this appointment, in case his presidential boom failed to materialize.

The candidacy of Mr. Chase was officially announced by the appearance of the Pomeroy circular, so called. It was in the mails as early as February 6. Ward H. Lamon visiting in New York wrote Mr. Lincoln under the above date that a banker, H. G. Fant, had received that very morning from Washington under the frank of Mr. Ashley, M. C. of Ohio "a most scurrilous and abusive pamphlet about you, your administration and the succession." Lamon further stated that Fant had given the circular to Leonard Swett who was leaving for Washington.

Secretary Usher wrote to R. W. Thompson on February 17 with respect to the circular: "I suppose you have seen the Pomeroy circular and have been amazed that Mr. Chase should have allowed such a paper to go to the public . . . Lincoln says but little, finds fault with none and judging from his deportment you would suppose he was as little concerned as anyone about the results."

Apparently the circular was so timed that it would reach the various political leaders throughout the country just previous to the state conventions in February. This move was primarily to forestall the selection of delegates to the national convention being instructed for Lincoln. DeWitt C. Chipman of Noblesville, Indiana enclosed in a letter to Lincoln one of the Pomeroy circulars he had received, franked by Henry Taylor Blow, M. C. from Missouri. Chipman advised Mr. Lincoln that the circular was sent to all government collectors in Indiana and he continued, "It was understood then and there that Secretary Chase would remove all who did not actively take the field for him and against you." The sequel to this move in the State of Indiana to capture the delegates at the state convention is found in a telegram sent by R. W. Thompson to Sec'y. Usher in which he states, "Convention has unanimously nominated Lincoln. The counter movement entirely a fizzle."

It was not until February 21, after some newspaper publicity had been given to the Pomeroy movement, that Chase wrote a letter of explanation to Mr. Lincoln about his part in the procedure and concluded by stating, "I would not wish to administer the Treasury Department one day without your entire confidence." This brought forth in reply one of Mr. Lincoln's most characteristic letters in which he stated in part with respect to the circular: "I have not read it, and I think I shall not. I was not shocked or surprised by the appearance of the letter, because I had had knowledge of Mr. Pomeroy's committee, and of secret issues which I supposed came from it, and of secret agents who I supposed were sent out by it, for several weeks. . . . Whether you shall remain at the head of the Treasury Department is a question which I will not allow myself to consider from any standpoint other than my judgment of the public service, and, in that view, I do not perceive occasion for a change."

Although the Pomeroy movement for Chase gradually faded out by the close of February, Simon Cameron wrote as late as March 7: "The Pomeroy circulars still continue to encumber the mails." Such letters as one written to Pomeroy by E. Perkins of Cleveland on February 24 must have informed Pomeroy of the failure of his proposal to arouse the people in favor of Chase. Perkins stated:

"We are united in both measures and men. We are in entire harmony with the great popular current which points so unmistakably to Abraham Lincoln as the Union nominee for 1864. In my judgment there are not a dozen Union men in this city who are not unequivocally for Honest Old Abe."

While we shall find a summer revival of Chase's presidential aspiration this more aggressive and exclusive movement in February to place him in the President's chair was sidetracked by the state conventions. Almost unanimously they instructed their delegates to support Abraham Lincoln for reelection in 1864.

American Centennial—

Drive to Replace Lincoln

Washington,
February 7, 1864.

President Lincoln remains undisturbed over the growing campaign by leading Republicans to replace him as the Republican candidate for President with Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase.

Told of wide distribution of a political pamphlet attacking him personally and as President, and urging the nomination of Chase at the June convention, Lincoln refused to read it.

"Mr. Chase makes a good Secretary," the President said, "and I shall keep him where he is. If he becomes President, all right. I hope we never have a worse man."

Some observers, like the astute David Davis, who managed Lincoln's nomina-



Salmon P. Chase . . . the nation could do worse.

tion four years ago, believe the President cannot be re-nominated.

"You would be surprised in talking with public men," Davis admits, "how few, when you get at their real sentiment, are for Mr. Lincoln's re-election."

Chase's Abortive Effort to win the Presidential Nomination in 1864

In 1864, the National Executive Committee of the Republican Party attempted to divert public support away from Abraham Lincoln, who wanted a second presidential term, by pressing the candidacy of Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase. The political strategy to accomplish this diversion was the issuance of a circular appearing over the signature of Senator S. C. Pomeroy of Kansas.

While several *Lincoln Lores* (Nos. 527, 1082 and 1097) have been devoted to a discussion of the Pomeroy Circular, the complete document, with introduction and conclusion, has never before appeared in the bulletin. The following copy is taken from the original circular marked "private" and signed by S. C. Pomeroy:

Private

Washington, D. C., February, 1864.

Sir:

The movements recently made throughout the country, to secure the renomination of President Lincoln, render necessary some counteraction on the part of those unconditional friends of the Union, who differ from the policy of his administration.

So long as no efforts were made to forestall the political action of the people, it was both wise and patriotic for all true friends of the Government to devote their influence to the suppression of the rebellion. But when it becomes evident that party machinery and official influence are being used to secure the perpetuation of the present administration, those who conscientiously believe that the interests of the country and of freedom demand a change in favor of vigor and purity and nationality, have no choice but to appeal at once to the people, before it shall be too late to secure a fair discussion of principles.

Those in behalf of whom this communication is made, have thoughtfully surveyed the political field, and have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. That, even were the re-election of Mr. Lincoln desirable, it is practically impossible against the union of influences which will oppose him.
2. That, should he be re-elected, his manifest tendency towards compromises and temporary expedients of policy will become stronger during a second term than it has been in the first, and the cause of human liberty and the dignity and honor of the nation, suffer proportionately; while the war may continue to languish during his whole administration, till the public debt shall become a burden too great to be borne.
3. That the patronage of the Government, through the necessity of the war, has been so rapidly increased, and to such an enormous extent, and so loosely placed, as to render the application of the "one-term principle" absolutely essential to the certain safety of our Republican Institutions.
4. That we find united in Hon. SALMON P. CHASE more of the qualities needed in a President during the next four years, than are combined in any other available candidate; his record, clear and unimpeachable, showing him to be a statesman of rare ability, and an administrator of the very highest order, while his private character furnishes the surest obtainable

guaranty of economy and purity in the management of public affairs.

5. That the discussion of the Presidential question, already commenced by the friends of Mr. Lincoln, has developed a popularity and strength in Mr. CHASE, unexpected even to his warmest admirers; and while we are aware that this strength is at present unorganized and in no condition to manifest its real magnitude, we are satisfied that it only needs systematic and faithful effort, to develop it to an extent sufficient to overcome all opposing obstacles.

For these reasons, the friends of Mr. CHASE have determined on measures which shall present his claims fairly and at once to the country. A Central organization has been effected, which already has its connections in all the States, and the object of which is to enable his friends everywhere, most effectually to promote his elevation to the Presidency. We wish the hearty co-operation of all those in favor of the speedy restoration of the Union upon the basis of universal freedom, and who desire an administration of the Government during the first period of its new life, which shall, to the fullest extent, develop the capacity of free institutions, enlarge the resources of the country, diminish the burdens of taxation, elevate the standard of public and private morality, vindicate the honor of the Republic before the world, and, in all things, make our American nationality the fairest example for imitation which human progress has even achieved.

If these objects meet your approval, you can render efficient aid by exerting yourself at once to organize your section of the country, and by corresponding with the Chairman of the National Executive Committee, for the purpose either of receiving or imparting information.

Very respectfully,

S. C. Pomeroy

Chairman National Executive Committee

The Pomeroy Circular was in the mails as early as February 6, 1864, in order that the various Republican leaders could take the proper political action in their state conventions later in the month. The circular continued to "encumber the mails" as late as early March.

Despite the efforts of the opposition group, the Pomeroy movement gradually faded away with the popular, political current, unmistakably, favorable to Lincoln as the Union (Republican) nominee for 1864.

Chase, unconvincingly, disclaimed any knowledge of the circular until he saw it in print. He wrote Lincoln a letter of explanation on February 21st and among other things he stated that:

"I do not wish to administer the Treasury Department one day without your entire confidence."

Lincoln replied: "I have not yet read it, and I think I shall not. I was not shocked or surprised by the appearance of the letter, because I had had knowledge of Mr. Pomeroy's Committee, and of secret issues which I supposed came from it, and of secret agents who I supposed were sent out by it, for several weeks . . . Whether you shall remain at the head of the Treasury Department is a question which I will not allow myself to consider from any standpoint other than my judgment of the public service; and, in that view, I do not perceive occasion for a change."

A thorough study of the Chase candidacy and the Pomeroy Circular are timely topics for this election year of 1972.

